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A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

It has become customary to expect a message from the President—either a word of encouragement for the work of the Association or a statement explaining where he stands.

Not born in this country but having chosen to come and live here almost twelve years ago, I feel

both proud and privileged to be an American. I am sure we all feel that democracy for us is not only the best, but only form of government — “a government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

I look upon the Armenian Missionary Association of America in a similar manner. It is the organization of the Armenian evangelicals, the membership is made up by

them, and it primarily functions for them. Every evangelical, thus, is a member of the AMAA irrespective of how humble or how generous is his donation. Although donations are necessary to carry out the operations, projects and plans of the organization, these become in a way secondary when we know that there are thousands of Christians praying for its success. These prayers with faith, will move the minds and hearts of men and women to contribute to the limit of their ability. One of the basic principles of Christianity is to give according to ones income; otherwise, God can make ones income like ones giving — and God works in mysterious ways.

Someone once said:

*Christ alone can save the world;
Christ cannot save the world alone.*

The AMAA can do a great deal of missionary work; when strengthened by the support of our Churches, it can perform miracles. This then should be our central purpose — faith in the power of God, assurance through prayer in His benevolent provisions, the love of Christ in our hearts, and the guiding light of His Spirit. All of us working together harmoniously with

CALLED TO MISSION

As we shoulder this awesome office, it behooves us to state from the start that it is our intention to underline the second word in our Association's title — the word “Missionary.”

The word mission has been abused over the centuries. In the mind of the average person, it represents an unattractive, gloomy, hell-fire preaching individual performing missionary work.

But, the modern image of a missionary is totally different. He is the modern parallel of a Peace Corp candidate, only with a bit more heart injected into his work. He does not preach the word only, but applies it in his life and challenges others to apply it too. He lives not around people but with them; he works not with people, but for them. The modern missionary gives of himself in all the areas of life that touch his brethren. If they are sick, he provides healing; if they are poor, he provides them with motivation to lift themselves up; if they are illiterate, he educates them; if they are devoid of faith, he inspires faith in them.

This is the mission to which we are called. But, the Missionary Association is only a tool. Spiritual men and women, mission-minded churches and institutions must provide the Association with goals, challenges, programs, ideas. With their prayers, they must inspire it and lift it up to the spiritual heights it deserves to rise.

We pledge to pray for all the evangelicals everywhere that from among them may rise a substantial number of persons who might indicate their desire to work for their Lord. We pledge to pray for all of our evangelical churches, that they may become mission-minded and use the Association to write a new chapter in the history of the Armenian Evangelical Movement by reaching out with the Gospel of Christ unto the uttermost parts of the world.

G. Chopourian,
Executive Secretary.

this kind of commitment can make the coming of His kingdom possible.

This is a most crucial year in the life of the Organization. We are in the midst of celebrating our 50th Anniversary. There are great plans afoot with almost all of us involved. Let us all join then in a spirit of humility and pray that God, who has given each one of us an opportunity to see our ‘Talents’, might also give us the wisdom to carry on the work.

— Nazar Y. Daghljan

50TH ANNIVERSARY THEME—“50 Years of missionary outreach; zeal for 50 more”

A Message from the Campaign Director

My Dear Countrymen:

Winter, 1969

Recently I faced the possibility of my death. It was during the approach to the London airport when the pilot announced that the landing gear would not lock. As we were being prepared for a crash landing, I was desperately seeking a reason for my continued existence. And I found it in this:

I deserve to live only as I continue to serve.

The Armenian Missionary Association has embarked upon its 50th Anniversary Fund Raising Campaign. Here is a remarkable opportunity for us to bring encouragement and hope to all of our people.

As your Campaign Director, it is my joy to inform you of my findings in the field through periodic News Letters. The first report from South America is enclosed. This and subsequent reports — England, France, Greece, Egypt, Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Iran, Armenia — will, we feel, enable you to determine your most important roll in this program of uplifting our people.

The benefactions of the AMAA are not limited to Armenian Evangelicals, their churches and institutions. The AMAA is non-sectarian and non-political in its outreach. A recent study of the senior class of one of our large

Evangelical high schools revealed that 34% were Evangelicals, 58% were Apostolic, 4% Roman Catholic and 4% of other faiths. A financial study of the same class showed that 85% had received aid to get them through high school, 89% would need help to get through college, and only 11% did not need any assistance. This is a concrete example of only one aspect of our service, crossing all boundaries to help our people.

Reinforced by our proud heritage, we must continue our prayers and our support to nurture our Armenian people throughout the world and thus enable future generations to experience the greatness to which they are entitled.

We deserve to live only as we continue to serve.

Faithfully yours,

Vartan Hartunian
Campaign Director



FIELD REPORT NO. 1

My Dear Countrymen:

By means of this first report, I wish to bring to your attention my observations regarding the condition of our people in South America and their needs.

FREEDOM —

In a public square in San Paulo, Brazil, I saw a monument to the Armenian Martyrs. It has these words on it in Armenian and Portuguese:

*Even if my feet are chained
And my hands are shackled,
And though my mouth is gagged
My heart will yet call for freedom!*

These are the words not only of our Martyrs 50 years ago but of the remnants of that holocaust scattered throughout the world. Because of restrictive governments, unstable economies, and technologically backward societies, they are still "chained, shackled and gagged." We in the United States can open the doors of freedom for our brothers and sisters. If we do not, we will forfeit our right to live.

ARMENIAN POPULATION —

The Armenians began to come to South America in great numbers only after the tragic upheaval of the First World War. A sizeable number immigrated also after the Second World War. Now there are three main Armenian centers in South America with 15,000 in San Paulo, Brazil; 12,000 in Montevideo, Uruguay; and 60,000 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. There are also some twenty to thirty thousand scattered throughout other cities. They are a pilgrim people in a strange

land, seeking meaning for their lives in industry, in religion and in fellowship with their kind.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION —

Of the 120,000 Armenians in South America, approximately 105,000 are Apostolic, 10,000 Evangelical or Brethren, and 5000 Catholic. Of the 10,000 Evangelicals, not more than 2000 are ever in contact with our churches either as members or visitors. South America is clearly a mission field to which the AMAA is being called. Because our people have so long been left without leadership, they are hungry for the Word of God and for Christian fellowship beyond their geographical areas. The AMAA is for them the image of hope, representing the only power that can still save the Armenian Evangelical movement in South America.

THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES —

Our Evangelicals have three churches, one in each city of San Paulo, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires. Not one of them has a Minister as such, although visiting clergymen and laymen are carrying on the work. In Montevideo, economically the poorest city, there is no church building and our people are beholden to a local Methodist church for worship space. The situation in each area is similar — the people are confused, disorganized, broken into factions, incapacitated for rational and positive action to solve their many problems.

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS —

I will never forget the power of the American Dollar! In San Paulo I was able to get 37,000 cruzeiros for a ten dollar bill.

Inflation has gone so far that the government has arbitrarily reduced 1000 cruzeiros to one. For all practical purposes, our one dollar has in Brazil the purchasing power of 3.7 dollars. In Montevideo, our one dollar is equal to 250 pesos and in Argentina, it is worth 350 pesos! From day to day our people do not know what they are actually worth and what they can actually buy. The "mighty American dollar" provides the only reliable economic compass for them. Under these circumstances, money transmitted from the United States to South America is absolutely necessary if we are to solve the problems of our churches and people.

MANY NEEDS —

My concern was aroused in the case of a 69 year old lady teacher of the Armenian language for 51 years, serving in Evangelical and Apostolic schools. Practically blind, she lives in a small room provided by those who have not forgotten her years of service. But she can hardly get by! There are others with urgent needs whose sorrow could turn to joy. I am thinking of an aged, retired Minister — one with rare linguistic genius — who is peddling goods from house to house and has no permanent home. I am thinking of a mother and daughter both of whom are critically ill and will not be able to work ever. And I am thinking of the injustice which exists in the world and how much you and I can do to bring the scales to a tolerable balance!

ONE ARMENIAN IN "ARMENIA" —

I met a devoted and energetic young man, Roberto M. Elmassian, who is presently serving our Montevideo congregation as Interim Pastor and is a member of the local Billy Graham Team. He told me of a crusade which he conducted in a city of Colombia called Armenia. The population exceeds 70,000 but there is not one Armenian living there. He learned that the city was named in honor of the Armenian martyrs who died in the 1880's during the Sassoon Massacres. It was a member of the Town Council who, at that time, moved that the name of the town should honor the Armenian Christian Martyrs. Today, all that is forgotten, except for this young Armenian evangelist who preached the Gospel to the natives. This young man needs our support and our prayers.

THE NEEDS OF OUR CHURCHES AND PEOPLE —

Our Evangelicals in South America have the following needs which the AMAA can meet only as funds are made available. A minimum of \$75,000.00 is required.

Relief for needy Armenians.
Pensions for Retired Ministers and Teachers.
Scholarships for Theological Students.
Missionary Work among Natives.
Distribution of Christian Literature.
Buses and/or Cars for Churches and Ministers.
Fund to supplement Minister's Salaries.
Church Building and Parsonage in Montevideo.
Church Extension and Parsonage in Buenos Aires.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING? —

Our people in San Paulo, Montevideo and Buenos Aires have organized local Campaign Committees to involve the entire Armenian community in the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the AMAA and to raise funds locally for their needs. We must join them with our concern, our prayers and our dollars. Only as they and we do our best can we be certain of our goal.



Monument to the Armenian Martyrs in San Paulo, Brazil

FROM DUST TO DESTINY —

The monument in San Paulo to the Armenian Martyrs had this thought also:

*They tried to destroy the Armenian Nation;
They sacrificed to the roaring flames the innocent
their churches;
They scattered the dead on plains and hills;
They made the Euphrates red with blood.
But the dust of the Armenian dead, like seeds,
sank into the ground throughout the world,
took root and grew, and today is blossoming
everywhere.
It is therefore our present joy to create a new
Armenian Nation that will live forever!*

It is for the enduring life of our Nation that we have launched our 50th Anniversary Campaign.

Vartan Hartunian.
Campaign Director

EMURIAN MEMORIAL FUND ESTABLISHED

The Reverend Sisak K. Emuryan, who died on Nov. 20, 1968 had, prior to his death, turned over four insurance policies to the AMAA totaling \$6,000.00, and requested that the proceeds be established into THE SISAG KRIKOR EMURIAN AND GRACE JENENYAN EMURIAN MEMORIAL FUND with the income, at the sole discretion of the Governing Board of the AMAA, for use to provide scholarships to promising Armenian students entering full-time Christian ministry and/or the maintenance of orphanages operated by the AMAA. The Reverend Emuryan served the Presbyterian denomination with great distinction, and served our Armenian Evangelical cause by his special revival meetings and the publication of several books of music. His composition is the only kind of its nature which provides an original Armenian Evangelical hymnology.

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INCOMPARABLE LOSSES

Mr. Samuel Hekemian, noted real estate broker and philanthropist, founder of the S. Hekemian and Co. Real Estate and Insurance firm in 1934, died at Hackensack Hospital at the age of 80. One of the original sponsors of the Home for the Armenian Aged in Emerson, an Elder and Trustee of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of West New York, and Honorary President of the Armenian Missionary Association of America whose Treasurer he was for many years, and the Founder of the religious and charitable foundation the Hekemian Foundation, his loss will be most strongly felt by the A.M.A.A. which he loved and served. Our heartfelt condolence to his sons Mr. Samuel Hekemian, Jr., Mr. Robert Hekemian and daughters Mrs. Marilyn H. Voskian, and Mrs. Ann H. Krikorian.

Dr. Jacob H. Hekimian, noted surgeon (Urologist) who was presented the New Jersey Medical Society's Golden Merit Award for 50 years of distinguished service as a practising physician died suddenly. Elder and Trustee of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of West New York for some 30 years, President of the Armenian Evangelical Union, and Board member of the A.M.A.A. and its President for a number of years, his sharp insights into the mission of the Association will be sorely missed. The Armenian Reporter, quoting his philosophy of life wrote thus: *Help your fellowmen to the limit of your ability and keep mixing with humanity, because that is the stuff out of which life is made.*

We extend to his two married daughters, Mrs. Gladys Keuhnelian and Mrs. Marie Alberian, as well as to his bereaved wife, our heartfelt condolences.

The Rev. Dicran Kherlopian, Prof. of Armenology in Haigazian College, and for many years pastor of our Armenian Evangelical Churches in Armenia and Lebanon, entered his eternal rest in Beirut. Out sincere condolences to his loved ones.

THE AMAA IN ACTION

- *A little girl in Damascus is given a basic education in an Armenian Evangelical School.*
- *A bright-eyed brood of grade schoolers receives a warm lunch each day – their only source of nourishment.*
- *An orphaned Aintabzi youth is the grateful recipient of a scholarship to Haigazian College – the only Armenian College in the free world, dedicated to Christian leadership.*
- *A tiny infant receives loving medical attention in an Aleppo Clinic.*
- *A humble Evangelical Church is erected in the outer reaches of Ekizolouk or the slums of Beirut to herald the Gospel message.*
- *A retired teacher and a minister's widow receive a modest subsidy, their sole resource.*
- *An indigent but consecrated candidate for the ministry is trained for future leadership at the Near East School of Theology.*
- *A lad from the interior of Turkey – certain to lose both his Christian heritage and Armenian identity – is brought to the nurture of the Christian Gospel.*

ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION

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